

Lincoln Center Festival 2007

July 10 – July 29

Slow Dancing (World Premiere)
Motion Portraits of Dancers

Multi-Channel Video Installation
Conceived and directed by David Michalek

Tuesday, July 10 - Sunday, July 29

New York State Theater, Facade, Josie Robertson Plaza, 63rd Street and
Columbus Avenue

Hours screened: 9 p.m. - 1 a.m.
FREE

Beginning July 10, Lincoln Center Festival will proudly present *Slow Dancing*, an outdoor installation of larger-than-life, hyper-slow-motion video "portraits" of extraordinary dancers and choreographers from around the world, conceived and directed by artist David Michalek. The installation will be seen on three five-story screens hung on the front facade of the New York State Theater on Lincoln Center's Josie Robertson Plaza. With *Slow Dancing*, Mr. Michalek attempts to simultaneously capture the beauty of the body in motion, while laying bare its most intricate workings.

Slow Dancing will run from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m., from July 10 through July 29.

Each subject's movement (approximately 5 seconds long) was shot on a specially constructed set using a high-speed, high-definition camera recording at 1,000 frames per second. The result is approximately 10-minutes of extreme slow motion, a motion portrait in which each dancer's unique artistic expression and technique are revealed as never before.

For the Plaza installation, a cycle begins as a full-length figure of a dancer appears on each of the three screens. Over the next 10 minutes, what at first appears to be a series of "still" photographs unfolds, gesture by barely-perceptible gesture, into an elaborate choreography. Viewers can choose to focus on one dancer's complete performance or observe the interplay among the three screens. The extreme slow motion also allows the viewer to share privileged information about the complexity of the simplest gestures; catching details that would normally escape the naked eye.

The subjects chosen for *Slow Dancing* are some of today's foremost modern and classical dancers and choreographers, as well as recognized master interpreters of a range of traditional and contemporary dance forms. The dancers represent a diversity of body types, sizes, training, styles, traditions, ages and ethnicities. They hail from the worlds of ballet (Herman Cornejo, William Forsythe, Isabelle Guerin, Allegra Kent, Alexei Ratmansky, Wendy Whelan); modern dance (Karole Armitage, Trisha Brown, Holley Farmer, Bill T. Jones, Desmond Richardson, Shen Wei); tap (Roxanne Butterfly), and from many countries, including the United States, Russia, Guinea, Indonesia, China, Turkey, Brazil, India, Taiwan and New Zealand. And they represent dance traditions and contemporary styles as diverse as Javanese court dance (Miroto Martinius), Krumping (Lil' C), "Voguing" (Benny Ninja), Afro-Brazilian Capoeira (Maestre Joao Grande), Hip-Hop (Kwikstep and Rokafella), Shantala Shivalingappa (Indian Kuchipuri), Beijing Opera (Wu Hsing-Kuo) and Flamenco (Omayra Amaya).

Featured Dance Artists Filmed for *Slow Dancing*:

Omayra Amaya
Karole Armitage
Alexandra Beller
Trisha Brown
Roxane Butterfly

Dana Caspersen
Shasta Cola/Glen Rumsey
Patrick Corbin
Herman Cornejo
Wayan Dibia
Gabriel "Kwikstep" Dionisio
Megumi Eda
Anita "Rokafella" Garcia
Eiko and Koma
Holley Farmer
William Forsythe
Maestre Joao Grande
Isabelle Guerin
Wu Hsing-Kuo
Emine Mira Hunter
Judith Jameson
Jill Johnson
Bill T. Jones
Allegra Kent
Youssouf Koumbassa
Miroto Martinius
Emine Mira Hunter
Benny Ninja
Lemi Ponafasio
Alexei Ratmanský
Desmond Richardson
Bill Shannon ("Crutchmaster")
Ari Candrawati Saptanyana
Putu Krisna Saptanyana
Fang Yi Sheu
Shantala Shivalingappa
Dwana Smallwood
Elizabeth Streb
Janie Taylor
Christopher "Lil' C" Toler
Jeremy Wade
Shen Wei
Wendy Whelan
Nejla Yasemin Yarkin

David Michalek is an artist who takes the concept and techniques of portraiture as the starting points for the creation of compelling works, on both a large and small-scale, in a range of mediums. His focus over the past ten years has been closely tied to his interest in relational aesthetics—specifically using performative and interactive techniques—storytelling, dialogue, movement—relying on the input and responses of others—subjects, collaborators and audiences—as integral to both the creation and the experience of his work. Much of Michalek's work of the last several years has been made while in residence. He studies an environment, gets to know the people in it, forms an impression about the area and its community, develops a concept around what might be possible and then design the concept or plan for what ultimately becomes a work of art. He has been drawn in particular to projects that bring together diverse groups of people in settings ranging from galleries to public spaces, churches and community organizations to health-care facilities. His *14 Stations* is one such project, created in collaboration with men and women transitioning out of homelessness, participating in the Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness and Housing at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York. *14 Stations* is modeled on the traditional Christian devotional rite, The Stations of the Cross, with a different man or woman assuming the role of the Christ figure in each. Group interaction, discussion, and communal meals were all part of the process.

Michalek's riveting, oversized black-and-white photos, mounted on back-lit displays have not only been exhibited in galleries and museums, but have served as the catalyst for interactive performance events in a number of cities, involving the homeless and formerly homeless interacting with the audience and participating in a performance of Bach piano works that incorporates projected stills of *14 Stations*. Covering the 2005 exhibit of *14 Stations* at The Brooklyn Museum, Art in America said, "Michalek's commiseration with his fellow humans and deep understanding of dramatic figurative representation have enabled him to produce a profound cycle of photographs."

Commissioned to create a film of still images for Peter Sellar's *Kafka Fragments*, a staged setting of composer Gyorgy Kurtag's searing work for soprano and violin, Michalek, then Artist-in-Residence at The

Bridge, Inc., a day-home for people living with mental illness, drew on his activities and interactions with patients to create his compelling photographs. Michalek introduced Kurtag's libretto at the residents' weekly poetry group, where it was read aloud and discussed. Out of these discussions, and over four months of work, he and the group staged and photographed scenes and tableaux for each of the 40 "fragments" of text that are sung by soprano Dawn Upshaw.

The Los Angeles Times, reviewing the 2005 performance of *Kafka Fragments* at Zankel Hall, wrote, "*Kafka Fragments* reveals the hidden places where light shines within the darkest recesses of our souls...[and the] photographs by David Michalek connect the musical fragments to suffering in the world and also to the beauty of the world."

Born in San Francisco in 1967, David Michalek earned a B.A. in English Literature from U.C.L.A. in 1990 and also studied filmmaking at NYU. He worked as an assistant to noted photographer Herb Ritts for two years, beginning in 1989. In 1991, he began his professional photographic career and worked regularly as a portrait artist for publications such as *The New Yorker*, *Vanity Fair*, *Interview*, and *Vogue*. Beginning in the mid-1990s, Michalek began experimenting with performance and installation, and developing large-scale, multi-dimensional projects. His solo and collaborative work has been shown nationally and internationally, with recent solo exhibitions at Yale University, The Brooklyn Museum, and The Kitchen. He has collaborated with director Peter Sellars on two staged works: *Kafka Fragments*, presented as part of Carnegie Hall's 2005-06 season; and *St. Francois d' Assise*, presented at the Salzburg Festival and Paris Opera. Other film and video work for theater includes collaborations with The Tallis Scholars; John Malpede and L.A.P.D. on three works, *Agents and Assets*, *The Skid Row Museum* and *RFK in EKY*; and with the Brooklyn Philharmonic in a project for The Brooklyn Museum's "Music Off the Walls" series. Michalek has been the recipient of numerous awards and fellowships, from, among others, The Franklin Furnace, The Durfee Foundation, The California State Arts Council, the Jerome Robbins Foundation, Karen-Weiss Foundation, and the Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County. Beginning in spring 2007, he will be an artist in residence with The World Performance Project at Yale University. He is on the visiting faculty of Yale Divinity School, where he lectures on religion and the arts. David Michalek lives in New York City with his wife Wendy Whelan, principal dancer of New York City Ballet.